

# Daily Pilot

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024 /// dailypilot.com



Photos by James Carbone

**SURFERS' HALL OF FAME** inductees, from left, Jeff Deffenbaugh, Ilima Kalama, Jamie O'Brien and Surfers' Hall of Fame founder Aaron Pai pose for pictures on Friday.

## Surfers' Hall of Fame inducts 3 more standouts in the sport

Jeff Deffenbaugh, Jamie O'Brien and Ilima Kalama join in the festivities for the 2024 class.

BY MATT SZABO

Longtime Huntington Beach High School surfing coach Andy Verdone remembers when Jeff Deffenbaugh graduated from Dwyer Middle School and entered high school.

Verdone put Deffenbaugh on varsity immediately. He saw the freshman win many heats, but he believes true character was revealed when he lost one.

"That's when you know someone's got it," Verdone told the crowd assembled at Friday morning's Surfers' Hall of Fame induction ceremony. "You look them in the eye and they take the loss hard. They don't say anything. They internalize it, they go back and they work it out. He hates to lose, but he's a great winner, Jeff Deffenbaugh."

Deffenbaugh was one of three surf standouts honored in the 2024 class. Hawaiian surfers Ilima Kalama and Jamie O'Brien also put their hands and feet into the wet cement in front of Huntington Surf & Sport, as per



See *Surfers*, page A6 **SURFERS' HALL OF FAME** inductee Jeff Deffenbaugh smiles as he places his hands in cement.

## Equestrian holdouts, horses barred from fairgrounds arenas

BY SARA CARDINE

More than a month after notices were posted at the O.C. fairgrounds' Equestrian Center — giving tenants who hadn't signed onto new contract terms 30 days to reconsider or vacate — padlocks went up Thursday, blocking arenas and open spaces.

Some horse boarders, trainers and riders who keep equines at the 7.5-acre Costa Mesa center were shocked to learn their horses would be physically restricted to barns and paved walkways at the site.

"[Horses] need to be able to move," said equestrian Macki Hamblin, who's rented six stalls at the facility for the past two years. "Taking away their turnout time or riding, they're not able to get their exercise."

A contingent of outlier tenants, after encountering the padlocks, showed up with horses and protest signs to demonstrate outside a special reception being held at the fairgrounds for area dignitaries and local officials.

Despite equestrians' shock and dismay, OC Fair & Event Center Chief Executive Michele Richards warned in a July 27 letter common areas would be blocked to those tenants who'd



Courtesy of Brian Lochre

**PADLOCKS INSTALLED** Thursday on an arena at the Orange County fairgrounds' Equestrian Center aim to block admittance to tenants who refuse to sign new contract terms at the 7.5-acre site.

See *Barred*, page A4

## Doctor sues to reclaim clinic

A Newport Beach pediatrician sues hedge fund he partnered with, alleges managers put profits before patients.

BY ERIC LICAS

The creator of one of Orange County's largest pediatric practices filed a lawsuit against the hedge fund he had partnered with to financially weather the pandemic, claiming it endangered patients by putting profits ahead of care, threatened to ruin his reputation and then fired him for speaking out.

Dr. Steve Abelowitz of Newport Beach started Coastal Kids in 2001, and since then it has expanded to nine locations in eight cities, including Irvine, Santa Ana, Laguna Hills and Ladera Ranch. The company found success, but like many others its future became uncertain amid the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic

See *Doctor*, page A5

## Fairgoer buys \$1M winning scratcher

A \$10 Multiplier Craze scratch-off ticket was reported sold Sunday.

BY SARA CARDINE

It's always a good time at the Orange County Fair, especially for one lucky fairgoer who reportedly won a \$1-million prize from a lottery scratch-off ticket purchased on the Costa Mesa fairgrounds.

A ticket sold at a booth manned by a retailer — a \$10 Multiplier Craze scratcher that boasts 24 chances to win, including bonus spots and cash prizes that could be multiplied by 2, 5, 10 and 50 — served up its jackpot

See *Winning*, page A2

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



James Carbone

**U.S. OPEN OF SURFING ARTIST FINDS PEACE WITH PAINT** PAGE A3

## Laguna aims to beautify commercial district with new incentive program

BY ANDREW TURNER

Looking for a collaborative effort to beautify its commercial district and draw more people into local businesses, Laguna Beach plans to incentivize property owners to maintain their buildings and the surrounding areas.

The city further defined the conditions by which a property would be considered a good neighbor. Conditions that constitute a nuisance were outlined in an ordinance approved by the City Council on July 23. Property owners, including those with va-

See *Beautify*, page A3

# Convicted robber charged with hit-and-run in Huntington Beach

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

A 49-year-old convicted robber was charged Thursday with a hit-and-run collision in Huntington Beach that injured a woman and with leading police on a chase.

Nakia Terrell Rouise was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, evading a police officer, reckless driving, failing to stop at a hit and run with injury

and car theft, all felonies, and a misdemeanor count of driving on a suspended license.

Just before 11 p.m. Tuesday, officers were dispatched to Adams Avenue and Brookhurst Street regarding the hit-and-run, according to the Huntington Beach Police Department.

An officer tracked down the suspected vehicle, which had been stolen, a

short time later, and when the officer attempted to pull the driver over the suspect kept going, and the pursuit ultimately ended when the car was disabled, police said.

Rouise was convicted of robbery in October 2002 and in January 1994 in Los Angeles County, according to the criminal complaint.

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## WINNING

Continued from page A1

last Sunday, fair officials reported Thursday.

"There's been a lottery booth at the fair for about 15 years, and there is always a line every time I walk by," said OC Fair & Event Center CEO Michele Richards. "I don't know if they think the fair is lucky, but it certainly was for one purchaser."

Though the lucky recipient shared the news with the retailer and other fairgoers in the immediate vicinity, California Lottery spokesperson Carolyn Becker said an official win could not be announced until the purchase and the card had been verified.

"We will not know who the winner is or whether they won until they come forward and file a claim. That begins the vetting process," she said Thursday.

"Unfortunately, we have people coming forward to declare a win who are bad actors. In a prize of this size, especially when it's a \$1 million win, our law enforcement division assigns an officer to call and question them about their win."

Becker said the California Lottery — whose games provide about 1% of the state's K-12 instruction funding, according to the California Department



Courtesy of Orange County Fair & Event Center

**ORANGE COUNTY** fairgoers line up to buy lottery tickets at a booth, where a \$20 purchase offers a chance to spin a wheel for free scratchers.

of Education — cannot directly sell tickets and instead relies on some 23,000 retail partners, who receive .05% of jackpots \$1 million or more as an incentive to participate in the program.

In this case, the OC Fair lottery booth operator could receive \$5,000 from last weekend's win, which by this week was already being advertised on a poster hanging up at the booth.

Lottery officials estimate the chance of winning a prize of any level on the \$10 Multiplier Craze game, including a free ticket, is 1:3.3. The odds of a cash prize are 1:612, but there is only a 1 in 1,220,542 chance of winning the full \$1-million jackpot, according to the

card's prize page. On top of the usual odds, lottery booths that make the state and county fair circuit in California feature prize wheels that allow those who purchase \$20 in tickets to spin for a chance to win free scratch-off tickets.

Richards said there's nothing like a fairgoer essentially turning into a millionaire overnight to confirm the validity of this year's OC Fair theme "Always a Good Time."

"This year's fair has been magical — people are having a fabulous time," she said Thursday. "So, this really is icing on the cake to what's been an incredible year so far."

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## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

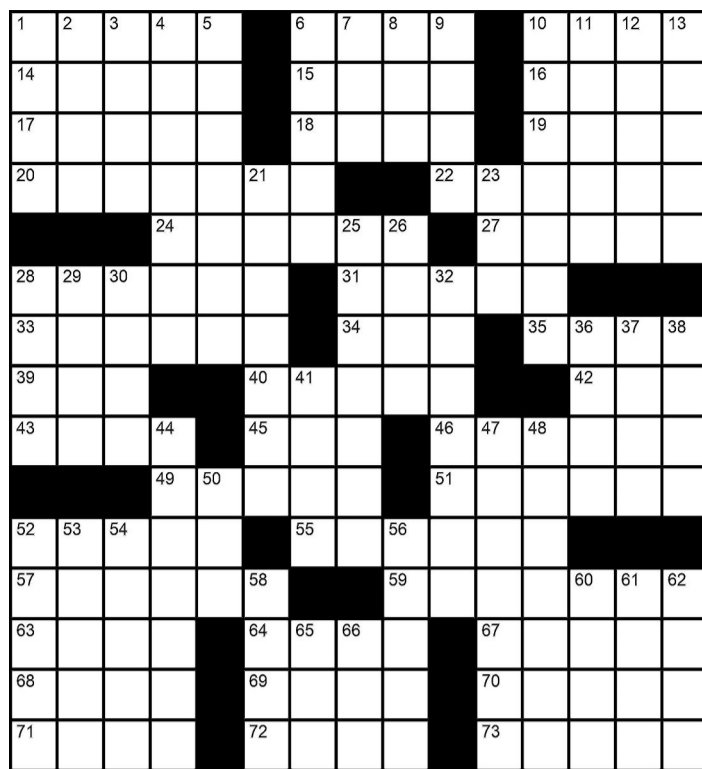
By Stella Zawistowski

### ACROSS

- 1 Blowout wins
- 6 Covers with frosting
- 10 Soybean-based paste
- 14 Clued in
- 15 \_\_, address, and phone number
- 16 Poems of praise
- 17 Group of nine
- 18 Factually correct
- 19 Protein vegetarians avoid
- 20 Tornado or dust devil
- 22 Political argument
- 24 Doles out
- 27 Cowboy's rope
- 28 Atom centers
- 31 Does damage to
- 33 Haul in
- 34 Whiskey grain
- 35 Sculpture and dance, e.g.
- 39 Number on a birthday card
- 40 "You beat me": 2 wds.
- 42 "Looke here!"
- 43 Require
- 45 Salty body of water
- 46 Weather map line
- 49 Let in
- 51 Up-to-date
- 52 Egg-producing organ
- 55 Facet
- 57 Hole in a pool table
- 59 Tel Aviv native
- 63 Feel sore
- 64 Boat's frame
- 67 "Snowy" bird
- 68 Landlocked Asian country
- 69 "Gotcha": 2 wds.
- 70 Thick books
- 71 Narrow opening
- 72 Groups of reps
- 73 Serpentine

### DOWN

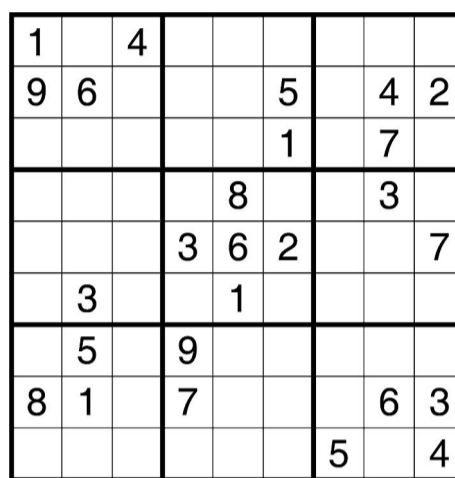
- 1 Tirade
- 2 "That HURTS!": 2



## SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A3.

- wds.
- 3 \_\_-pedi
- 4 Early discount event
- 5 Reaches an agreement
- 6 Emcee's speech
- 7 Sedan or coupe
- 8 Flightless bird
- 9 Tournament position
- 10 Kenyan city
- 11 Notions
- 12 Chairs and sofas
- 13 Bony prefix
- 21 Snobbery
- 23 Shade tree
- 25 Gulleets

- 26 Pronounces aloud
- 28 Indian flatbread
- 29 Strongly encourage
- 30 First Nations people
- 32 Ends one's career
- 36 Judge's garment
- 37 Holier-\_-thou
- 38 Separate by type
- 41 "Star Wars" princess
- 44 Least promising
- 47 Confidential matters
- 48 Eight-sided shape
- 50 Hair color
- 52 Iridescent gems
- 53 Outspoken
- 54 Sneezing sound
- 56 Heaps
- 58 "\_\_ means war!"
- 60 Humorist
- Bombeck
- 61 Onion relative
- 62 "The \_\_-Bitsy Spider"
- 65 Function
- 66 Permit

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**THE CROWD | B.W. COOK**

# 3 al fresco summer events focus on dining, music and great causes

Summer dining for a cause was the theme as the Festival of Chefs honoring and benefiting KidWorks held its third annual culinary extravaganza at the Newport Beach Country Club.

Some 67 amazing food artists produced their delectable canvases for the table set before ultra-generous KidWorks diners, raising in excess of \$1 million on their recent Sunday night al fresco summer night on the coast.

The host chef of the night was the talented **Gracme Blair** of Newport Beach Country Club, who welcomed the lauded and honored guest chef of the party **Chef Michael Campbell** of Pacific Pearl and Copas. Campbell received the KidWorks Philanthropic Award for his extended community outreach assisting underserved youth in O.C.

Notable chefs supporting the charitable outreach also included **Robert Gomez** (A Restaurant), **Prabean Prathapan** and **Bert Agor Jr.** (Balboa Bay Club and Balboa Bay Resort), **Kevin Jones** (Cannery), **David Martin** (Pacific Club), **Ben Martinek** (Pendry) and **Alan Ramirez** (Butterflight Food Service), to name only a few.

The Newport band of the decade Tijuana Dogs were on stage to entertain along with hula dancers from Roy's Restaurant and a mariachi band from Butterfly Food Services. Indeed, something for everyone! The evening was produced by the talented **Kristen Martin** and her team at KM Productions.

Spotted in the crowd were: **Devon and Kevin Martin, Kathy and Noel Hamilton, Ruben and Heidi Mendoza, Natalie and Todd Pickup, Carolyn and Joe Moody, Kiri and Chase Wheeler and Arcely and Adrian Montero.**

Since 1993 KidWorks has served the educational, cultural and spiritual enrichment of students and families in central Santa Ana with preschool, after-



Ann Chatillon

**CAROLYN AND** Joe Moody, Devon and Kevin Martin and Natalie and Todd Pickup help raise \$1 million for KidWorks at a Newport Beach Country Club event.

school, tutoring, mentoring and adult services encompassing health, parenting education and more.

To learn more, visit [Kid WorksOC.org](http://KidWorksOC.org).

**HOAG SUMMER FEST**

Another perfect summer evening on the Orange Coast celebrated the lifesaving and life-affirming mission of Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian as some 1,300 local citizens came together for the 2024 Hoag Summer Fest at Newport Dunes.

On stage and upfront again, the sounds of the Tijuana Dogs provided the permeating popular beat as 43 O.C. celeb chefs provided the eats. More than \$360,000 was raised to benefit Hoag's ongoing crisis response innovation, reports **Chelsea Kottke** from Hoag Communications.

"We love celebrating Hoag Summer Fest with the community. For 35 years, this event has not only served as a way to benefit Hoag patients but also bring supporters, friends, neighbors and staff together for a night of fantastic food, fun, and entertainment," stated **Flynn A. Andrizzi**, president of the Hoag Hospital Foundation. "We are incredibly grateful for our community partners who continue to help Hoag lead in transforming the future of healthcare here in Or-

ange County and beyond." Chairing this year's Hoag Summer Fest were the mother-daughter duo **Mari- anne Nahin** and **Kristen Nahin Gooding**, and the **Peter & Mary Russo Family Foundation.**

Hoag Summer Fest restaurant partners all deserving mention and credit for making the event a success donating their time, talent, food and beverages were A & O Restaurant | Bar, Ambitious Ales, Angelina's Pizzeria Napoletana, Argaux, Avana, Bluewater Grill, Booch Craft, Bred Hot Chicken, Bosscat Kitchen & Libations, Chaak Kitchen, Colette's Catering, Descanso, El Cholo, Fishbonz Seafood Grill and Five Crowns.

Also front and center were Flaky Apple Pie Co., Gabbi's Mexican Kitchen, Harborside Restaurant and Hi-Time Wine Cellars, Ho Sum Bistro, Kona Ice of Huntington Beach, Lido Bottle Works, Louie's by the Bay, Mary & Dick Allen Diabetes Center Mobile Kitchen, Milk & Cookies, Miss Mini Donuts, Modo Mio Rustic Kitchen, Morning Lavendar Café, Morning Shrum, Newport Rib Co., Nowhere Bakery, Oliver's Osteria, Simply Fish, Starfish, Straub, Tanner's Restaurant - Paséa Hotel & Spa, Ten Sushi & Cocktail Bar, the Bungalow, the Cannery, TK Burgers and W Café & Restaurant.

**ANNUAL CONCERT BENEFITS HIGH HOPES**

The third summer dining, music and great cause evening on the social menu hit it out of the proverbial park recently on the grounds of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Newport Beach. The 25th "Eric Marienthal and Friends" jazz concert benefiting High Hopes Head Injury Program raised an impressive \$200,000 from some 600 revelers attending the outdoor concert event.

"Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the incredible support from our community and the outstanding performances by Eric Marienthal, Patti Austin, and David Benoit. Your contributions have significantly impacted the High Hopes Head Injury Program," said **Mark Desmond**, the visionary behind the program's development.

The Tulsa Rib Co. catered the evening for VIP guests and provided a memorable dining experience, hosted bar and entertainment by the Ron Kobayashi Trio with special guest artist, singer and songwriter **Mary Desmond**, Mark Desmond's daughter. She is a talented R&B-infused pop singer, a multi-talented songwriter, musician, performer and actress. SiriusXM On Air Personality **Talaya Trigueros** served as master of ceremonies along with Desmond. **Kevin**



Kevin Warr

**CAROLYN MCKITTERICK**, Dwight and Kathie Armstrong enjoying the evening at Hoag Summer Fest.



Sheri Determan

**DAVID BENOIT** and Eric Marienthal perform on stage benefiting the High Hope Head Injury program.

**O'Callaghan** was the auctioneer for the evening.

**Eric Marienthal** took the stage and opened the show with "Lolo Shuffle," then went right into "You Ga (Ta Give It)" from his 2020 album release Double Dealin' with Randy Brecker, then into "Two in One" from his 2012 "It's Love" album, as well as his hit "New York State of Mind."

**Lindy Boone Michaelis** and **Mike Michaelis** were honored with the High Hopes Lifetime Achievement Award. Lindy is one of Pat Boone's daughters. Ryan (Lindy's son) fell through a three-story skylight and landed on the concrete below in 2001. They sought help at High Hopes for Ryan's traumatic brain injury.

A very heartwarming testimony was given by **Britney**, daughter of **Bob Vermes**, board president of High Hopes. She suffered a stroke two years ago and couldn't walk or use her left arm. Tearfully, she told her story about watching her

mom volunteer at High Hopes since she was 4 years old, never thinking she would need the services. She's been coming to High Hopes and has regained her life back.

The event's sponsors were H&H Lee Foundation, Carol and James Reed, the Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, KJAZ 88.1, The Keith Family Fund at California Community Foundation, 94.7 the Wave, Xerox, Smooth Jazz News, Rainone & Jones Families, Millie and Severson General Contractors, Minuteman Press Costa Mesa, Ryan's Reach and Stirling Properties.

Established in 1975, High Hopes Head Injury Program is a one-of-a-kind nonprofit charitable rehabilitation organization dedicated to those devastated by brain injuries. For more information, visit [HighHopesBrainInjury.org](http://HighHopesBrainInjury.org).

**B.W. COOK** is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.

**BEAUTIFY**

Continued from page A1

cant buildings, will be expected to keep their properties clean, safe and visually appealing.

A pool of up to \$300,000 will be made available to assist businesses in complying with the ordinance. A business may qualify for as much as \$10,000 in reimbursement of community development fees if related maintenance projects are completed within the first year following the adoption of the program, which was established via a council resolution.

The community development director would make determinations with respect to the completion of projects.

"We all know those properties, and we can point them out, that need a new coat of paint or need some landscaping, or even somebody to go out there with a broom and sweep the front sidewalks," Paula Hornbuckle-Arnold, the board chair for the Chamber of Commerce, said when reached for comment on Friday. "Some need roofs replaced, some need awnings redone, and they're just shabby."

"The idea behind this was just to sort of support these business owners financially, in the case of eliminating a permit fee or getting reimbursed for a permit, to make these changes without being penalized."

Chamber officials hoped to educate inquiring business owners on the reimbursement process. Reimbursement will

apply to community development fees. It will not apply to the maintenance itself.

"This is a time when the city sees the need because there are definitely some properties that are worse than others at this point, and they are reflecting badly on the businesses that are their neighbors," said Erin Slattery, the chamber's president. "We want to make the whole city look good and appealing for our residents and our visitors, and we want our businesses to thrive."

The ordinance does not go into effect until 30 days after approval of the second reading. The next meeting of the city council is scheduled for Aug. 13.

Nuisance abatement

could be sought in the form of an administrative citation against noncompliant properties.

"This ordinance shows our commitment to making Laguna Beach's commercial areas more attractive," Mayor Sue Kempf said in a statement. "By offering support and incentives, we aim to help our business community thrive and create a vibrant environment for everyone."

"As part of this effort, we are excited to introduce the 'Charm Challenge,' which will recognize and honor property owners and tenants who consistently maintain exemplary standards."

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**CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS**

R	O	M	P	S	I	C	E	S	M	I	S	O
A	W	A	R	E	N	A	M	E	O	D	E	S
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9	6	3	8	7	5	1	4	2
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5	4	9	3	6	2	8	1	7
6	3	8	4	1	7	2	9	5
4	5	6	9	3	8	7	2	1
8	1	2	7	5	4	9	6	3
3	9	7	1	2	6	5	8	4

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# U.S. Open of Surfing featured artist finds peace with paint

BY MATT SZABO

Victoria White understands the joy that surfers can feel while in the water on a big wave.

She feels it with a stroke of a paintbrush, as she illustrates a culture that she has really come to appreciate.

The Santa Monica-based artist is again a featured artist for this year's U.S. Open of Surfing in Huntington Beach.

Last year, she used her now-trademark three surfboard canvas to paint a portrait of legendary Duke Kahanamoku on the sand.

This year, White's subject will be the late pro surfer Andy Irons.

"Even the most successful people in the world have their inner demons and their mental struggles," she said of Irons, who died at age 32 in 2010.

White, originally from New Orleans, has seen it in her own life. She was a corporate lawyer for a decade and got very sick, packing

up her dog and her suitcase — and her box of paints — and heading back to Southern California in 2018.

A philosophy major in college, she turned back to journaling every day, reading a lot and creating.

"That framework is essentially what made me into the artist and person that I am today," said White, who turns 43 on Sunday. "I consider myself first and foremost a philosopher, and that philosophy informs my artwork, who I'm painting and why I'm painting them. What inspires me about the subject?"

She will be live-painting in the lobby of the Pasea Hotel & Spa during the U.S. Open, likely coming down to the sand for Finals Day on Aug. 11, World Surf League Global Chief Revenue Officer Cherie Cohen said.

Cohen first met White at a music festival a couple of years ago. Among the pieces she had on display

was one of the legendary surfer Kelly Slater.

"Her booth was literally packed," Cohen said. "I had to buy a piece of her work. It was so awesome and electric. I loved the whole thing, and so I asked her if she would come to the Open last year, and she did. Her work is portrait-based, but in a modern way, and I think people respond to that."

Paul Maddison, the general manager of Pasea, said the hotel is happy to have White in the mix for the big nine-day event. Her space will feature a pop-up shop, as well as displaying her artwork.

"Her work perfectly complements our collection of art throughout the property that thoughtfully celebrates Huntington Beach surf culture — including our iconic wave-inspired lobby mural crafted from flip-flops," Maddison said. "Each year, our resort serves as a home base for U.S. Open of Surfing spectators and athletes,



James Carbone

**VICTORIA WHITE**, a Santa Monica-based artist, a featured artist for this year's U.S. Open of Surfing, poses with her signature surfboard at Pasea Hotel & Spa in Huntington Beach on Friday. She will be live-painting a new, iconic, triple-surfboard portrait of Surf Legend Andy Irons for her U.S. Open exhibition as a tribute to his contribution to surfing this year.

and Victoria's exhibit at Pasea gives guests and locals a chance to experience the vibrant spirit of Surf City here at our oceanfront destination."

White said a portion of the proceeds will go to Indivisible Arts of Hermosa Beach, a nonprofit where she teaches children. She

had her first solo art exhibition there in February 2023, featuring a portrait of the late surfer Miki Dora.

White may no longer be practicing law, but she has peace.

"It's so important to be open to the opportunities that come your way," she said. "Openness and curi-

osity, and just seeing where things go, is a really important virtue that I've tried to develop in my life. I'm glad I was open when my friend suggested I paint a surfboard because here I am today."

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## BARRED

Continued from page A1

failed to submit to a new six-month contract outlining rental fee increases and other mandates by a June 15 deadline.

"Only occupants with a valid rental agreement will be permitted to use the arenas, round pens, turnouts and hot walkers," the letter reads. "Feeding of horses and cleaning of stalls will continue and will not be interrupted."

Hamblin is among 20 tenants who submitted a signed contract by the deadline but included several edits she claimed were necessary to ensure the safety of her animals. The red-lined contracts, and rent checks that failed to in-

clude the recent fee hikes, were rejected by OCFEC.

Richards confirmed Friday another 16 tenants have valid contracts and badge access to the common areas for at least 10 horses, while another 50 animals kept by outlier tenants do not.

Many boarders — including those who, like Hamblin, provide horses, training and program support to nonprofits that work with low-income students, veterans and individuals with special needs — say the increased rents will price them out of the facility.

Others take umbrage with the fact that fair-ground officials, who took over operations of the facility from a third-party vendor in 2023, entered a

costly contract with Laguna Hills-based street-sweeping company Lopez Works, Inc. for maintenance and cleaning of the grounds.

Those with a long history of keeping horses at the site, who can recall past efforts to close the Equestrian Center to accommodate a parking lot, fear increasingly untenable conditions will lead to the center's closure.

A \$229-million facilities master plan for the Costa Mesa fairgrounds, approved in Jan. 2023 by OCFEC's Board of Trustees, included no proposals for improving the current facility.

Instead, the document outlined a plan for a public-facing community equine center that will offer therapeutic programs, hands-on

demonstrations, training and regional horse shows, in addition to private horse boarding and lessons, under the new moniker the Ranch.

Although board members have publicly expressed a desire to bring stakeholders to the table in the visioning process for the Ranch, so far only hastily scheduled one-on-one, closed-door sessions with Richards have been offered to tenants.

Hamblin said that beyond the fee hikes, the main sticking point among Thursday's protesters is that no good-faith offer has been made by officials to discuss new contract terms, ways to save money or to include stakeholder input on what future programs at the Ranch might look like.

"We've been asking for a seat at the table and asking to have a conversation," said Hamblin, who had a one-on-one meeting with Richards in May she described as unproductive. "At board meetings, we get to talk and they get to talk, but there's really no interaction."

"I'm hopeful we can have a dialogue and have everyone get back on the same page."

As for barring horses from exercise areas, Orange County Supervisor and former Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley in a release Thursday called the move unfair to boarders and their horses.

"Fair staff must reverse this decision and open the arena for exercising horses and resume discussions

with tenants after the conclusion of the OC Fair," Foley said. "Right now, we must focus on helping the horses while the humans negotiate their disputes."

Hamblin agrees.

"Part of me doesn't quite understand resorting to leveraging people's animals for negotiations," she said Friday. "That does not make sense to the animal lover in me. They didn't do anything — why are they being punished?"

Although no steps to physically evict uncontracted tenants and their horses have been taken, Richards confirmed Friday the district was "considering all options available to it."

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## SURFERS

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Surfers' Hall of Fame tradition.

Deffenbaugh represented Huntington Beach on the big stage throughout the 1990s. He won seven professional titles, including the Katin Pro-Am crown in 1992 and '98.

Nowadays he continues to give back to the next generation through the Huntington Beach Boardriders Club. This year, he also served as the surfing grand marshal at the annual Fourth of July parade.

Two-time U.S. Open of Surfing champion and Surf City local Brett Simpson, who served as emcee of Friday's ceremony, said Deffenbaugh has always made a big impression on him.

"He just turned 51 and he still goes out there and drops nines with ease," Simpson said. "Everyone goes, 'How does he get the waves?' I'm like, 'I don't know, just watch him, he knows where to go sit.'"

Deffenbaugh, during his comments, gave advice to his children.

"It does move fast," he said. "You guys gotta follow your passion, stay focused and stay true to yourself, too. Sometimes you have to bend a little bit in life, but just don't break, OK?"

Kalama, originally from Oahu, moved to Newport Beach with his family at age 16 and immediately made his mark on the mainland. Serving as a Huntington Beach lifeguard, he won the West Coast Surfing Championship in 1962, the eventual predecessor to the U.S. Open of Surfing.

After returning to Hawaii, he came back to California and



Photos by James Carbone

**LOCAL HUNTINGTON BEACH** surfer Brett Simpson inducts Ilima Kalama into the Surfers' Hall of Fame during Friday's ceremony in front of Huntington Surf & Sport. Kalama, a Hawaii native who lives in Costa Mesa, won the West Coast Surfing Championship 62 years ago.

relocated to Costa Mesa, where he still lives.

Corky Carroll, who also competed in that 1962 contest, offered some thoughts on Kalama during Friday's festivities.

"It was the first year the surf was really big and gnarly," Carroll said. "It was like 10 feet, it was blown out ... nobody could ride it except for Ilima. He was like this

royal Hawaiian kind of dude, with a beautiful stance and just shredding through the pier like it was nothing."

O'Brien, 41, has the nickname "JOB." He won the 2004 Pipeline Masters — at 21 years of age — but ended up earning more notoriety as a free surfer, as well as with a very successful YouTube channel.

"What an icon to the sport," Simpson said. "Is there a more barreled surfer in the world? I don't think so."

O'Brien said when he got an email about being inducted into the Surfers' Hall of Fame, at first the family didn't think it was real.

"A couple of days later, it was like, 'Oh, I think this email might

be real," he said with a laugh. "The way they reached out to us was kind of cool. I felt like they could have just asked Brett Simpson, 'Hey, can you hit up Jamie?' But maybe Brett didn't want to talk to me. He still owes me a board."

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## DOCTOR

Continued from page A5

Coastal Kids over the phone at the time. So she reached out to Abelowitz's wife via WhatsApp, and they got him to call Nguyen just as he was getting off of an international flight back to Orange County. He set her at ease, guided her through the emergency and "saved my daughter's life twice," Nguyen said.

But in recent months Abelowitz stopped taking appointments or showing up at his practice's loca-

tions, appearing to drop off the face of the earth to Nguyen and other Coastal Kids members. That's because Pediatric Associates barred him from seeing patients and banned him from the premises of the company he started, according to his suit.

### SUING FOR OWNERSHIP OF THE COMPANY HE CREATED

Abelowitz claims he repeatedly had issues with policies he felt were negatively affecting patients but received little more than lip service. According to the lawsuit, representatives for Pediatric Asso-

ciates tried to coerce him into handing over his shares in the company in May 2023 and January 2024.

During the latter meeting in Newport Beach, the pediatrician was told he was being investigated for a complaint of abuse. However, there was no record of any complaint or grievance in Abelowitz's employee file, according to his suit.

Regardless, Abelowitz claims that supposed complaint was used by Pediatric Associates as a pretext to manipulate provisions in their agreements and wrong-

fully fire him. The management company later held a virtual meeting with Coastal Kids physicians and declined to provide specifics regarding his termination but insinuated that the situation was similar to another involving a clinician who was caught abusing drugs, according to the lawsuit.

"Dr. Abelowitz was terminated for a pattern of conduct toward employees that is inconsistent with our values and policies as an organization," a Pediatric Associates said in its statement.

The Newport Beach pediatrician is suing for ownership of

the company he founded and spent the past two decades building up, as well as damages associated with lost wages, legal fees and emotional distress. He and his attorneys also hope a judge will prohibit Pediatric Associates from "engaging in the corporate practice of medicine."

Meanwhile, Nguyen said she and other Coastal Kids families were looking for alternative care providers and waiting for Abelowitz to open a new practice.

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Los Angeles Times

## TimesOC

California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's [TimesOC newsletter](#) with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spooky-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.